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## **Michigan State Employee Retirees Association Endorses Protect Our Jobs Ballot Proposal**

### **Constitutional Amendment Would Also Protect State Employee Pensions and Benefits**

At its May 4 meeting in Lansing, the Michigan State Employee Retirees Association Coordinating Council composed of delegates from SERA chapters around the state endorsed the campaign to put a constitutional amendment on the ballot guaranteeing collective bargaining rights for private and public sector employees. Some Council delegates took Protect Our Jobs petitions to circulate for signatures of registered voters.

"The Protect Our Jobs Amendment is especially important to state employee retirees to support," said Bob Kopasz, Chair of the Michigan SERA Coordinating Council. "The Amendment would empower state employee unions to not only bargain over wages and working conditions, but also future retiree pensions and benefits."

The Council heard from Erin Butler, the Mid-Michigan field representative of the Protect Our Jobs campaign, and Larry Schneider, attorney for the Michigan State Police Troopers Association, before voting overwhelmingly to endorse it. The MSPTA has had constitutionally protected bargaining rights since a constitutional amendment was passed in 1978.

The ballot proposal is a response to over 80 bills introduced in the Michigan Legislature reducing unionization or employee rights in Michigan since January 2011. Twenty-five of those bills have passed and been signed into law.

The proposed amendment includes the right to bargain retirement and pensions for future state employee retirees. It will not provide for bargaining over current state retiree pensions and benefits.

Nearly 323,000 valid signatures will be needed by July 9, 2012, to get the amendment on the November ballot.

For more information:

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